

wounded. These quarters were hospital tents raised above the ground, upon yellow pine underpinning and floors, bountifully supplied with bedding, attendants, food and medicine, and in every way a credit to the professional skill and philanthropy of Dr. Cowgill, and the humanity of our Government. I could not avoid indulging the comparison between the condition of these men under the care of our medical officers, and that of our poor fellows who had suffered in Rebel Hospitals and Rebel prison pens.

I found that Dr. Page was making preparations to cultivate his large hospital garden, amounting to over one hundred acres in the suburbs of Newbern, for the benefit of men in the Hospitals, and the forces operating in this vicinity, while all the details of his work in other fields of usefulness were being attended to with admirable zeal, fidelity, and intelligence.

Leaving Newbern on Saturday we passed through Pamlico, Croatan, and Albemarle Sounds, and the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal to Norfolk, where I visited Mr. Sherman, the gentleman in charge of the affairs of the Commission at this point, and examined his store-house, and method of transacting business, with satisfaction.

I then visited the lodge of the Commission at Portsmouth, opposite Norfolk, which is in charge of Mr. Alcock. I found this lodge in admirable order. As you are familiar with its condition and usefulness through the regular reports of Mr. Alcock, I shall not enter into details.

On Monday the 27th, I left Norfolk for New York, via Fortress Monroe and Baltimore. I cannot express too highly my obligations to Dr. Dalton, for his able services, nor forget to mention those of Messrs. Cobb and W. A. Paton, who accompanied us from New York, and gave their assistance in many of the details of the work.

*Extract from my Letter to you, dated Wilmington, N. C.,  
March 20th, 1865.—11 P. M.*

The returned prisoners sent into Wilmington numbered nearly 9,000. About 7,000 of the less famished have gone North. General Abbott, who received our poor fellows in the exchange, has just told me that language would utterly fail to describe their condition. Filth, rags, nakedness, starvation, were personified. Many of the men were in a state of mind resembling idiocy, unable to tell their names, and lost to all sense of modesty, unconscious of their nakedness and personal condition. Some of them moved about on their hands and knees, unable to stand upon their gangrenous feet, looking up like hungry dogs, beseeching the observer for a bite of bread or a sup of water. Some of them hitched along on their hands and buttocks, pushing gangrenous feet, literally reduced to bone and shreds, before them. Others leaned upon staves, and glared from sunken eyes through the parchment-like slits of their open eyelids into space, without having the power to fix an intelligent gaze upon passing objects. Others giggled and smirked and hobbled like starved idiots; while some adamant figures walked erect, as though they meant to move the skeleton homewards so long as vitality enough remained to enable them to do so. To see the men who remain here in hospital would move a heart as hard and cold as marble. Their condition is that of men who have for months suffered chronic starvation. Their arms and legs look like coarse reeds with bulbous joints. Their faces look as though a skilful taxidermist had drawn tanned skin over the bare skull, and then placed false eyes in the orbital cavities. They defy description. It would take a pen expert in the use of every term known to the anatomist and the physician to begin to expose their fearful condition.

Very respectfully yours,

C. R. AGNEW.